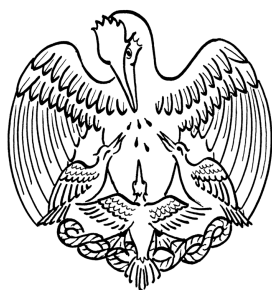


# SAWSTON VILLAGE COLLEGE



## NEWSLETTER

7 July, 2009

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### **Dates for your diary**

North vs South Athletics Evening 6 – 9 pm	13 July	Staff training day	2 September
Year 8 Drama Revue 7.30 – 8.30 pm	14 July	(school closed to pupils)	
End of summer term at 12 noon	17 July	Orientation day for Year 7 pupils	3 September
GCSE results day	27 August	(Year 7 pupils only to attend)	
		Autumn term begins for all pupils	4 September

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Dear Parent

Unbelievably, here we are with only 7 school days left until we break for the summer. It was hard to grasp that when thunderstorms swept the campus. Small boys dived into puddles and swam the length of the playground; girls screamed every time there was a lightening strike and those who were neither sought shelter from both. Last week presented further meteorological challenges as we sweltered in the blazing heat. Still, we're an adaptable lot.

At least the sun shone on Fountain Court to allow Year 11 to take their formal leave of us. And, my goodness, didn't they scrub up well, the girls' dresses a rainbow of colour, the boys barely able to move their heads for the risk of scything their necks, so starched were their unaccustomed collars. If you want to see for yourself how wonderful they looked, log on

[www.elite-photography.co.uk](http://www.elite-photography.co.uk) ,  
click *Client Area*, user name  
*member*, password *222555*.

They arrived on Fountain Court in some wonderful vehicles – limousines, the A Team's truck, an ambulance, a double-decker bus – the simplest and most original this year, was the tricycle, cycled by Tom Byers with a very elegant Lizzie Worster perched stylishly on the back. Those who walked in received just as warm a welcome from the spectators, of whom there were very many, as those who paid a fortune to hire exotic vehicles – a message, perhaps, for Year 10 when they are organising their participation next year.

Year 11 has been a wonderful year group and their going saddens us all. I hope that they will take with them happy memories of their SVC days and think of us fondly in times to come as we will of them.

My warmest thanks and congratulations go to Miss Plant, their Head of Year, who has supported them tirelessly and with great skill and professionalism through their five years at the college. Many have benefited from her hard work, her practical compassion and her brisk encouragement: a Head of Year par excellence.

### **Cinema comes back to Sawston**

Some of you may already have sampled the delights of our youth-led cinema in our Youth Centre in recent months, as the young people have tested their audience with a range of screenings so that they could establish demand. In truth, it seems to be the case that whatever they choose to show attracts a capacity audience, so great is the demand for a local cinema.

The 2 July saw the formal opening of the cinema,

celebrated by the premiere of the film made by our cinema group: Projecting the Past. I know it is the default mode of headteachers to praise their pupils' efforts unequivocally, but in this case, any praise I can offer would be less than deserved. This little gem of a film, encapsulated the history of cinema in Sawston through the eyes of older residents who regularly attended the original cinema. And what stories they had to tell.

Our pupils did it all: interviewing the residents, film-making, editing, projecting, organising front of house and box office. Tom Curran, former pupil of SVC and last year's BBC Young Composer of the Year, composed the original score to accompany the film.

In short, it was a stunning accomplishment.

I am immensely grateful to Lesley Morgan, our Arts Development Manager, whose energy, commitment and passion for the Arts and offering young people the opportunity to shine, has driven the project and enabled it to happen by raising over £100,000 to equip the cinema and bring in the experts to train our young people to do the outstanding job that they did.

I was overwhelmingly proud of all of them for their amazing achievement. Thank you.

### **Year 6 Induction Day**

The rhythm of school life moves us ever onwards. This week has seen the arrival of the new Year 7, as they participated in their induction to the College. We were very impressed with them; they behaved perfectly and look set

to be a very positive addition to the school community.

Our Year 9 form helpers did a wonderful job of looking after them and supporting them on the day and then, beyond that, their parents who visited the evening after.

Year 7s also benefited from the attention of our new Peer Mentor Group who were on hand throughout the day, as they will be in September and beyond, to help with any problem they had whether small or not. Their distinctive French Navy sweatshirts make them very readily identifiable to all of us: an excellent addition to our support structures for our pupils of all ages.

### **Specialist College Activities Week (SCAW)**

You will no doubt have been able to read the whole story of SCAW in the latest edition of the Fountain out earlier this week. Suffice it to say that the College was a hive of exciting activity through the course of a very vibrant and enjoyable week. Our pupils participated in: team building activities with the army – some of them even survived it (the soldiers, I mean); trips to the Space Centre and the London Eye as parts of projects focused around the visits; projects linking Science and Technology where they made and marketed their own bath bombs; an engineering project that had them building and racing go-karts; an African theme in school that allowed them an insight into African art, cooking and music – it was purely coincidental that visitors from Africa arrived in school and were able to listen to our pupils' rendering of African music; they pronounced it a

'fusion'; I think that's a good thing.

Each year, our staff seeks to improve the quality and diversity of the activities we offer at school during the week. Next year will see further expansion and refining of our offer to our school-based pupils, particularly as we are moving Year 10 Work Experience to another time of the year to avoid the annual clash with modular examinations.

And then, of course, our Languages Department offers trips to France, Germany and Spain, our PE Department trips to France and to Ferry Meadows and our History Department a trip to Italy – all in all our young people are well-served by a very enthusiastic staff willing always to go the extra mile whether at home or abroad to widen our pupils' experience and to build their sense of community and of belonging to the school. They have my very grateful thanks.

### **Pupil Leadership**

We have been delighted with the introduction of our new system of pupil leadership and are looking forward to developing it still further next year as it becomes embedded into the school's routines. I must pay tribute to our outgoing Pupil Executive: Ritwika Sengupta, Head Girl, Tom Byers, Head Boy, Lucy Goodman, Deputy Head Girl, Sam Love, Deputy Head Boy, Ella Gough, Chair of the Ethos Forum, Haley Sayer, Chair of the Learning Forum, and Lizzie Worster, Chair of the Environment Forum. All of them have discharged their duties with great effectiveness and

earned our respect unequivocally.

Now, of course, our Year 10 pupils step up to the plate. Those interested in holding leadership positions in school submitted their letters of application to me. They were then interviewed by a panel, which this year, included Tom, our current Head Boy. Staff then cast their votes and the results were announced to staff and pupils. The new Senate – yes, we're continuing and expanding the Latin theme – is as follows: Lucy Fitzpatrick, Head Girl, Ajay Jones, Head Boy, Diana Paulding, Deputy Head Girl, Luke Bucklow, Deputy Head Boy, Emily Cowling, Chair of the Ethos Forum, Hannes Whittingham, Chair of the Environment Forum, and Zuhair Crossley, Chair of the Learning Forum. I have every confidence that this group of fine young people will contribute significantly to the progress and development of the school.

We were delighted to celebrate the contribution of this year's Forum members to the work of the school on Tuesday evening when they outlined their various models of leadership: Senate, Language Leaders, Technology Leaders, Sports Leaders, Paired Readers and Year 7 Helpers to an invited audience of parents and friends. It was a great pleasure to meet with them later, too, on Fountain Court, over an expertly cooked barbecue, in between cloudbursts, of course.

### **Ofsted speaks ... again**

As you no doubt already know, we enjoy a very positive reputation for the quality of our History teaching. This attracted the attention of Ofsted last

week when they visited to spend time on a 'good practice' visit. As the inspector who contacted me said, 'This is not a compulsory visit; you can say no if you wish ...' Mmmm.

The outcome – they found the exceptional practice they were seeking. They were able to report on the high enjoyment of our pupils fostered by the excellent teaching and the exemplary way in which our colleagues build our pupils' interpretations of history.

The team has my warmest congratulations and thanks for the quality of their work.

### **Swine flu**

You will no doubt have been following the spread of this illness in the media and may have heard of the recent closure of a Cambridgeshire secondary school.

The advice we have been given by the Local Authority is that only the Health Protection Agency can recommend school closure and is now – thankfully – very unlikely to suggest that schools close. If individual children are diagnosed as having the flu, it will be left to parents to let us know, as, indeed, two already have. Please be reassured, however, there is no reason to keep your children off school to prevent their catching the illness, however hard they might try to persuade you ...

This situation has driven home to us the importance of having up-to-date contact information for all of our parents for the start of term. Can I urge you, please, to return your details updated to school as soon as possible, to allow us to update our database for the start of

the new school year. Wherever possible, an e-mail address would be very helpful, as it would allow us to communicate swiftly with large numbers of parents.

### **The University of Cambridge's 800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

To celebrate its anniversary, the University has been involving young people across the City in a range of opportunities.

#### *Letter to the future*

Twenty-eight of our Year 8 pupils had the opportunity to contribute to the University's 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations. Accompanied by Miss Haworth and Mrs Maltby they participated in the 'Letter to the Future' event. They wrote up final copies of their pre-prepared letters onto special archive paper that were then placed in sealed envelopes to be placed in the University archives only to be opened a century later during the 900<sup>th</sup> celebrations.

The first part of the session looked at letters that had been donated to the archives in previous centuries. A college archivist engaged the pupils by telling them about the detective work that went into discovering more about the authors of the letters. In the latter half of the morning our pupils, along with others from surrounding schools, were taken to the great hall where below the great paintings of notable alumni they wrote up their final draft. Pupils received a certificate stating a personalised number that would identify their letter allowing the claimant to open it in 2109 and as was pointed out to them, this may even be

them, given that the oldest man in the world who lives in England has just had his 113<sup>th</sup> birthday!

Our pupils thoroughly enjoyed the experience and felt honoured and privileged to be able to participate.

### *Engineering project*

The challenge went out across Cambridge to build a bridge from a limited range of materials – card, paper, string – that would look beautiful but also withstand significant weight. Congratulations go to Frances Hardy who put together a crack team and won 1<sup>st</sup> prize for the best bridge in terms of aesthetics and 2<sup>nd</sup> prize for its ability to take the most weight. The team's bridge is on display in our foyer – a significant achievement in the context of the many teams who participated in the project.

### **Sporting success**

Several of our athletes have experienced real success this term, qualifying from the District trials to run in the County Championships

Jack Wainwright, Year 8, came a very creditable 4<sup>th</sup> in the 400m; he was running in the junior boys' competition which is for boys in both Years 8 and 9.

Hannes Whittingham, Year 10, came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the 1500m. In Year 11, Hayley Sayer won the Shot and Hammer competitions for her age group and came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Discus; Martin Lawrence won the Shot and came 2<sup>nd</sup> in Discus; Ben Kelk was 2<sup>nd</sup> in 400m Hurdles, 2<sup>nd</sup> in Long Jump, 3<sup>rd</sup> in 200m and Adam Joel came 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Long Jump.

Hayley, Martin and Ben went on to the Anglian Championships on the basis of these performances in Norwich. Ben came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 400m Hurdles and 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Long Jump; Martin came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the Shot Putt and 5<sup>th</sup> in the Discus and Hayley came 5<sup>th</sup> in the Hammer and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the Shot Putt.

Following their performances over the season all three of these prime athletics have qualified and been selected for the English Schools' championships, which are to take place at the Don Valley Stadium in Sheffield on 10 and 11 July. This is a fantastic achievement especially for Martin who has narrowly missed out on the qualifying distance over the past couple of years by centimetres. Some of the event finals will be shown live on Sky Sports between 2pm and 6pm on the Saturday afternoon – do tune in to track their success. They have our thanks, congratulations and very best wishes for all they have contributed to SVC sport over their five years with us.

Congratulations, too, to Sam Love and Georgina Schwiening who were the first SVC boy and girl to romp home in the Sawston Fun Run – the biggest entry yet.

### **Music**

It was a great honour for our pupils to be asked to sing with Choir 2000 at West Road Concert Hall in the inaugural British performance of *Le Laudi*, a piece by Herman Suter. The complexity of the piece is the reason why it is only now reaching our shores, but undaunted, our redoubtable Mrs Macleod booked members of our Junior Choir to perform

alongside the 80 strong choir and the Cambridge Orchestra. The purity of our pupils' singing drew the admiration of a full house and brought great credit to our school. We were delighted to read a review of the piece by David Hill, erstwhile Director of Music at St John's College, Cambridge, Winchester and Westminster Cathedrals and currently Director of the BBC Singers and London Bach Choir. He's heard a few youngsters sing in his career! He wrote: 'The Sawston Junior Choir provided a laser-beam sound and were a model of how a children's choir should sing.'

They were in action again last week at the Lower School Concert. The quality of this year's concert at which only pupils in Years 7 – 9 perform, was outstanding, underscoring that the future of excellence in musical performance at SVC is secure. The range of musical instruments, the virtuosity with which our pupils played them, the wonderful singing by the Junior Choir and, for the first time, the dancing of Ellis Northrop and Caroline Worster made for an exhilarating evening. Our pupils have my warmest thanks, as do our wonderful Music teachers, Mrs Macleod and Miss Haworth, who enthuse, amuse and inspire their charges.

### **Drama**

My thanks go to Mr Higgins who made it possible for a hundred of our pupils to experience the delights of *As you like it* at the Globe Theatre: a wonderful setting, wonderful production and wonderful experience only made possible by our teachers' dedication to enthusing their charges. Thank you.

## Science

A team of six pupils left 17 other Cambridgeshire schools in their wake as they romped home to win the Science Challenge held annually at Swavesey Village College. Congratulations to Alison Jackson and Peter Noble in Year 7, Jesse Campion Loth and Emily Davidson in Year 8, Cecilia Buckingham and Williams Ingram in Year 9 and to their Science teachers who prepared them for the event.

## Parental questionnaire

Each year, a company working on our behalf, sends out a questionnaire to a random sample of our parents, seeking their views on the school's progress. We were delighted with the overall judgement of 'outstanding' this year. Thank you to those of you who took time to complete and return it. Your support is greatly appreciated.

There were, of course, aspects of the school's performance that parents highlighted as areas for improvement. We use that information to develop the school improvement planning process. I will write to you more fully about that in the autumn term.

We also receive a summary of comments that parents have written – all anonymised, which can sometimes be difficult if an issue is raised and we have no way of addressing it specifically with the parents who raised it. Can I urge you, therefore, that if you do have an issue that is causing you real concern you contact us directly. We should be happy to help.

Mind you, the anonymity can sometimes play in parents' favour. For example, the parent

whose comment indicated that 'the Principal's newsletter is too wordy and tells us nothing about the school' has so far escaped reprisals ...

## Locality work in the spotlight

You may already know about, or even have benefited from, the work we do as a group of 15 schools across the Sawston / Linton locality in support of vulnerable children, young people and their families. Our work has on several occasions attracted national recognition because of its quality. On this occasion, we had a visit from the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Training and Development Agency for schools (TDA) because we are regarded as running a 'Rolls-Royce' service. They followed up their visit with another, this time to make a DVD to be shown at national conferences.

While it is a significant accolade for all of our schools to have our work recognised in this way, we are rather nervous that we have yet to see the DVD. They promised air-brushing, but even so ...

My warmest thanks go to our locality team under the outstanding leadership of Jo Shickell, our Locality Manager, for the exemplary quality of their work that brings so much credit to the school.

## Community Education

The programme for the autumn term will be distributed to your homes shortly. In the interim, if you are keen to book up your winter evenings, please go to [www.bepartnership.org](http://www.bepartnership.org) where you can book your place. There really is something there for everyone: from aerobics to

Indian head massage; from baby massage to tap dancing; from dress-making to floristry. If there are no courses there that will attract you in, then let us know what would and we will look to set them up for the spring term.

## John Huntingdon's Charity

This wonderful local charity is seeking a new trustee to swell its ranks. For an application form please contact the office on 01223 830599 or alternatively download it from the charity's website at [www.johnhuntingdon.org.uk](http://www.johnhuntingdon.org.uk). The closing date for applications is Friday 17 July.

## Leavers

When we reconvene next term on 2 September, several of our colleagues will no longer be with us. My warmest thanks and best wishes go to:

- Miss Herrick, Teaching Assistant;
- Mr Newman, Design Technology Technician;
- Mrs Hogg, Mathematics;
- Mrs Revill, Dance;
- Mrs Horrocks, Science and former Head of Year;
- my PA, Mrs StJohn, who is retiring; we have worked together for a long time, first at Netherhall and latterly at SVC. Replacing her unique blend of organisational skills, loyalty, positivity, endless good humour and prodigious work rate will be a significant challenge. We interviewed this week and, despite the 127 expressions of interest in the post, were unable to appoint; we are now calling Miranda 'the irreplaceable, Mrs StJohn';
- Mrs Topping. Art and Design, who came back to SVC after having had her

children some 4 years ago and brought ceramics and pottery back to the department; she is leaving to spend more time with her children and to run her own studio; I am very pleased that she is continuing to work with us – she will be running an after-school pottery class and is also teaching in our community education programme;

- Mrs Gard, whose care of her pupils in her 18 years with us has been exemplary. When she asked to teach part-time this year, she only did so on the understanding that she could retain her form, so keen was she to take them through to the end of their SVC years; she has contributed significantly to the English Department in so many ways, not least in the number of theatre trips she has run;
- Mr Konig, who has taught at SVC for 34 years and is part of the fabric of the school; he has done so much for so many young people with much acerbic wit and good humour and will be fondly remembered by all, not least for his annual rendition of the 'school song', his own creation, that charts the highlights of school life across the five years to the hilarity of our pupils.

We welcome Miss Lavis back this week following the birth of baby Melanie who came to the Leavers' Ball decked out in her finest and Mrs Anderson will be back with us in the last week of term following the birth of baby Cameron.

### **End and start of term arrangements**

Term will end as usual at 12 noon on 17 July. As our established parents know, we try to end the term positively for all of us – Years 7 and 8 have a concert in the Hall while the older year groups participate in sporting activity ... perhaps swimming on the playground, if the weather continues to behave capriciously ...

Buses will depart from the playground at 12.05; we will need to make alternative arrangements for pupils travelling on Stagecoach: the majority will catch the C7 bus from opposite the Police station; pupils travelling to Babraham will be taken home by minibus; a letter will go out to pupils affected before the end of term.

School starts again for staff on 2 September, for Year 7 pupils on 3 September and for everyone on the 4 September. We find that the staggered start helps us to settle in the new year group and reassure them that they can easily manage the transfer to secondary school.

### **School uniform**

Can I ask you, please, to ensure that you take particular care when you are purchasing school uniform this summer. We look to you to support our uniform policy actively. If you don't buy items that breach our rules, they can't wear them!

A particular plea for girls' skirts – it's clear that skirts are back in fashion, judging by the number now emerging from wardrobes. Please ensure that

these are, as it says in the rules, traditional school skirts of approximately knee-length. Any skirt that could feasibly be worn to a party does not meet either of these criteria. We are also hoping that we have seen the last of the 'skirt' that looks more like shortened Aladdin baggy pants. As they say, school is not a rehearsal, it's the real thing. It would be good to have that mirrored in workmanlike clothing. Thank you for all you will do to ensure that our girls come properly clothed to school.

Our uniform shop is open on 22 and 23 July, 1, 2 and 3 September from 10 am to 3 pm.

### **Buses for Trumpington and Harston**

We were very pleased to be able to secure school transport for our Trumpington and pupils recently. None of them is officially entitled to bus passes, as they live outside our official catchment area, so we were very pleased that we are now able to confirm the details of their journey as follows.

The services 31B, C and D will be withdrawn at the end of term; these are being run by another company from September and will provide transport *only* for pupils with bus passes from the County Council.

Stagecoach will provide an additional bus on Route C7 departing Trumpington at 0755hrs to the College in the morning and leaving from the College grounds at 1515hrs.

As a registered local bus service this will be available to

any member of the public. As such the journey will serve all bus stops along the line of route but will divert to serve the College grounds. In real terms, however, members of the public are more likely to want to travel on the C7 scheduled at the same time that will not come on to the College premises at either end of the day. This is, therefore, effectively, a C7 for SVC pupils.

Cambridgeshire County Council passes issued for use on the services formerly operated by this company will not be valid on this bus.

We were very pleased that Stagecoach was willing to offer this service and to meet our request that the buses started and ended their journeys on our site.

The only caveat is that our pupils use the service. Clearly, were it to prove uneconomical in the longer-term, the company would have to reconsider. With a cohort of 55 pupils scheduled to be travelling on that route, it is unlikely to be travelling empty!

We are awaiting confirmation for some good news for our Harston pupils. We shall write to parents before the end of term when details have been confirmed.

### **Good wishes**

Our jobs are so much easier with your full support – thank you so much for all you do to support us to support your young people. Working with them is a joy and a privilege. That's not to say that we won't, as you will, look forward to a summer break – or convalescent spell, as we call it

- filled with family, friends, fun and laughter. Oh, and sunshine.

Wherever you go, whatever you do, go well and stay well.

June Cannie  
Principal